

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00558 01 OF 03 211024Z
ACTION AF-10

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6979
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY MASERU
AMEMBASSY MBABANE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 CAPE TOWN 0558

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, SF
SUBJECT: PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE: PETTY APARTHEID

REF: CAPE TOWN 0355,

1. SUMMARY: MUCH OF THE PROGRESS SOUTH AFRICA HAS CLAIMED
IN "MOVING AWAY FROM DISCRIMINATION" HAS BEEN IN REGARD TO
THE WEB OF SEGREGATION PRACTICES IN PUBLIC FACILITIES,
AMENITIES AND SOCIAL MIXING COMMONLY KNOWN AS PETTY APARTHEID.
OVER THE NEXT YEAR, THE SAG IS LIKELY TO REVEAL A NUMBER OF
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00558 01 OF 03 211024Z

ADDITIONAL REFORMS IN THIS FIELD. THE PRIVATE SECTOR ON
ITS OWN INITIATIVE AND IN MOST CASES WITH GOVERNMENT
ACQUIESCENCE WILL TAKE OTHER STEPS IN THIS DIRECTION.

2. ADMINISTRATIVE CHANGES RATHER THAN LEGISLATIVE
REFORM, HOWEVER, ARE LIKELY TO BE THE PATTERN. IN
ADDITION, THERE WILL BE A WIDE VARIATION IN APPLICATION

OF CHANGES AS BETWEEN THE LARGE URBAN CENTERS AND THE REST OF THE COUNTRY. MUCH IF NOT MOST OF THE INITIATIVE FOR CHANGE WILL COME FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND PRIVATE ENTERPRISE. GOVERNMENT ACTION WILL USUALLY BE TAKEN WITH LITTLE FANFARE BECAUSE OF THE FEAR OF THE WHITE BACKLASH. NEW STEPS TO REMOVE PETTY DISCRIMINATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE ARE LIKELY TO BE IN THE SAME AREA AS SUCH REFORMS IN THE PAST, I.E., TRANSPORTATION AND ENTERTAINMENT FACILITIES, HOTELS, RESTAURANTS AND SPORTS. AND, AS IN THE PAST, MOST OF THE ANNOUNCED REFORMS WILL LIKELY HAVE ONLY SUPERFICIAL IMPACT ON THE PATTERN OF SOCIAL SEGREGATION OR THE LIFE OF THE AVERAGE BLACK SOUTH AFRICAN. CHANGES FOR COLOREDS AND INDIANS, HOWEVER, COULD POSSIBLY COME MORE RAPIDLY THAN FOR AFRICANS.

3. BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS AND MUCH OF THE WORLD ARE LIKELY TO SEE FORTHCOMING CHANGES IN PETTY APARTHEID AS COSMETIC OR "TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE." NEVERTHELESS, PROGRESS IN THIS DIRECTION WILL REMOVE SOME UNNECESSARY IRRITANTS AND COULD ENHANCE THE POSSIBILITIES OF BLACK-WHITE DIALOGUE. END SUMMARY.

4. PETTY APARTHEID CAN BE ROUGHLY DEFINED AS THOSE ASPECTS OF SOCIAL SEGREGATION ON THE PERIPHERY OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S POLICY OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT, ENCOMPASSING ALL ASPECTS OF THE POLICY WHICH COULD BE CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00558 01 OF 03 211024Z

CHANGED WITHOUT AFFECTING WHITE POLITICAL CONTROL OR ALTERING THE BASIC SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY. WHILE THERE IS NO FIRM LINE DIVIDING "PETTY" FROM OTHER APARTHEID, PETTY APARTHEID IS GENERALLY CONSIDERED TO CONSIST OF THE MORE BLATANT OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS OF SEGREGATION: SEPARATE AND USUALLY UNEQUAL FACILITIES AND AMENITIES, RESERVATION OF FACILITIES TO A SINGLE GROUP, ALMOST ALWAYS THE WHITES, AND BARS AGAINST SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MIXING. THE MORE SERIOUS ASPECTS OF THE APARTHEID SYSTEM, INCLUDING HOMELANDS, SEPARATE RESIDENTIAL AREAS AND SCHOOLS, INFLUX CONTROLS, AND OTHER PRACTICES THE DEPARTURE FROM WHICH WOULD MEAN A SIGNIFICANT SHIFT IN POLITICAL DIRECTION, ARE NOT CONSIDERED "PETTY."

5. AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF THE TYPES OF CHANGES WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE TO DATE INCLUDES REMOVAL OF SIGNS, OPENING OF SOME PARKS, MUSEUMS, ART GALLERIES, MOST ELEVATORS AND "QUEUES," AND A STRICTLY LIMITED NUMBER OF SPORTS FACILITIES, THEATRES, AND RESORTS. BLACKS MAY NOW STAY IN A FEW "INTERNATIONAL" LUXURY HOTELS, AND MAY USE THEIR RESTAURANTS AND BARS, BUT NOT THEIR

SWIMMING POOLS OR DANCE FLOORS. IN THE FIELD OF
TRANSPORTATION, INTERNATIONAL ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE
TERMINALS OF AIRPORTS ARE OPEN TO ALL, AND AIRPLANES
AND LUXURY TRAINS ARE INTEGRATED. IN CAPE TOWN,
SEGREGATION ON BUSES HAS NOT BEEN ENFORCED FOR SOME
MONTHS, AND IT HAS BECOME COMMON TO SEE NON-WHITES
ON THE "WHITE" LOWER DECK AND VICE VERSA. IN EARLY
1976 IT WAS DECIDED THAT BLACKS WITH FIRST CLASS
TICKETS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO USE THE "WHITE" EXITS AT
CAPE TOWN RAILROAD STATION. A CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE
HAS RECENTLY RECOMMENDED THAT PERMITS FOR OPEN
ADMISSIONS BE GRANTED TO MAJOR CULTURAL CENTERS;
MULTI-RACIAL CASTS, HOWEVER, WILL VERY LIKELY CONTINUE
TO BE EXCLUDED FROM GOVERNMENT-BACKED THEATRES LIKE
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PAGE 04 CAPE T 00558 01 OF 03 211024Z

THE OPERA HOUSES IN CAPE TOWN AND PRETORIA.

6. THE NEW POLICY OF ALLOWING MULTI-RACIAL SPORTING
EVENTS (DESCRIBED IN 77 PRETORIA 4279) IS A MORE IMPORTANT
MOVE AWAY FROM PETTY APARTHEID IN TERMS OF ITS
PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT. WHILE SUCH EVENTS NOW TAKE

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00558 02 OF 03 211041Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 CAPE TOWN 0558

PLACE REGULARLY, SPORTS MINISTER KOORNHOFF LAST YEAR REASSURED THE PARTY FAITHFUL THAT LESS THAN ONE PER CENT OF SPORTING EVENTS IN THE COUNTRY ARE MULTI-RACIAL. KOORNHOFF RECENTLY DECREED THAT MULTI-RACIAL SPORTS CLUBS COULD APPLY FOR "INTERNATIONAL" STATUS AND THEREBY INCLUDE NON-WHITES IN THEIR SOCIAL EVENTS.

7. THE SAG OFTEN CLAIMS CREDIT FOR IMPROVED CONDITIONS FOR BLACKS WHERE THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OR ORIGINALLY OPPOSED THE CHANGED IN QUESTION. MANY OF THE RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF SPORT, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00558 02 OF 03 211041Z

FOR EXAMPLE, SUCH AS THE CREATION OF MIXED-RACE TEAMS, LEAGUES, AND CLUBS HAVE BEEN TOUTED BY SAG INFORMATION OFFICERS OVERSEAS, WHILE THEY HAVE OFTEN BEEN DISCOURAGED BY THE GOVERNMENT AT HOME.

8. ANOTHER RECENT STEP TOWARD ELIMINATING PETTY APARTHEID IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS THE ATTENDANCE BY BLACKS AT SOME "WHITE" CHURCH SERVICES IN THE TRANSVAAL, A PRACTICE WHICH HAS BEEN COMMON FOR SOME TIME IN THE CAPE. THIS PRACTICE MAY INCREASE SOMEWHAT FOLLOWING A MARCH 17 ANNOUNCEMENT BY CONNIE MULDER THAT CHURCHES WILL HENCEFORTH NO LONGER NEED PERMITS TO HOLD OPEN SUNDAY SERVICES. OTHER RECENT PRIVATE SECTOR MOVES HAVE BEEN THE INTEGRATION OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF THE BOY SCOUTS, AND THROUGH STATUTORY ANOMOLIES THE PERFORMANCE OF ISOLATED MULTI-RACIAL DRAMA PRODUCTIONS AND EVEN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEW MULTI-RACIAL NIGHT CLUBS IN JOHANNESBURG. ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAS OPPOSED SOME OF THESE PRIVATE MOVES TOWARD INTEGRATION, THEY NEVERTHELESS REPRESENT A BREAKING DOWN OF THE PETTY APARTHEID STRUCTURE. PRIVATE COMPANIES AND ORGANIZATIONS IN THE BIG CITIES WILL VERY LIKELY CONTINUE THEIR EROSION TACTICS AGAINST PETTY APARTHEID. A GROUP OF ABOUT 20 RESTAURANTS IN JOHANNESBURG, FOR EXAMPLE, IS REPORTEDLY HOPING TO TAKE THE PLUNGE TOGETHER INTO A NON-RACIAL POLICY, A MOVE WHICH WILL, HOWEVER, REQUIRE GOVERNMENT APPROVAL.

9. LOOKING AT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE PICTURE, SOUTH AFRICA STILL HAS A LONG ROAD AHEAD TO ELIMINATE PETTY APARTHEID. ENFORCED SEGREGATION STILL EXISTS IN HOSPITALS AND AMBULANCES, TAXIS, BUSES, TRAINS, BEACHES, SWIMMING POOLS, LIQUOR STORES, PUBLIC TOILETS, AND GAME
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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00558 02 OF 03 211041Z

PARKS; IN ADDITION, SEGREGATION REMAINS THE RULE IN MANY OR MOST STORE CHANGING ROOMS, MOVIE THEATRES, HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, BARS, BENCHES, PARKS, NIGHT CLUBS AND OTHER RECREATIONAL AREAS.

10. THE NEW MEDIUM OF TELEVISION IS ALSO STRUCTURED TO PROJECT A SEGREGATED SOCIETY. ON LOCALLY PRODUCED TV, BLACKS SELDOM APPEAR AT ALL AND ARE NEVER SEEN AS MAIN CHARACTERS. SABC-TV IS NOW PLANNING A SEPARATE "AFRICAN" CHANNEL, BUT THE GOVERNMENT RECENTLY CONFIRMED THAT IT HAS NO PLANS TO APPOINT A BLACK TO THE SABC BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

11. THE INCONSISTENT APPLICATION OF PETTY APARTHEID REFORMS STEMS FROM THE FACT THAT ALL OF THE CHANGES TO DATE HAVE BEEN ADMINISTRATIVE ONES AND THEIR APPLICATION IN MOST CASES HAS BEEN UP TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS OR PRIVATE COMPANIES. THERE HAS BEEN NO LEGISLATIVE REFORM IN THIS FIELD. THE SEPARATE AMENITIES ACT, FOR EXAMPLE, SIMPLY MAKES IT LEGAL FOR GOVERNMENTAL BODIES OR PRIVATE ENTERPRISES TO PROVIDE AND REQUIRE THE USE OF SEGREGATED FACILITIES AND AMENITIES EVEN IF THEY ARE UNEQUAL. WHAT HAS CHANGED IS THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT NOW ENCOURAGES A LIMITED DEGREE OF DESEGREGATION OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AND IN SOME AREAS UNDER ITS DIRECT CONTROL (E.G., RAILROADS, CIVIL AIR AND POST OFFICES) HAS TAKEN THE LEAD IN PARTIAL INTEGRATION OF SERVICES. THE OPENING OF A FEW HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS IN THE MAJOR CITIES HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED BY THE GRANTING OF PERMITS WHICH ALLOW EXCEPTION TO THE GROUP AREAS ACT.

12. VERLIGTES (LIBERALS) WITHIN THE NATIONALIST CABINET REALIZE THAT ANY HOPE OF BRINGING COLOREDS AND INDIANS INTO THE LAAGER AND MAKING THE POLICY OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT MORE PALATABLE TO BLACKS AND MINIMALLY OBJECTIONABLE ABROAD WILL REQUIRE ENDING AS MANY PUBLIC DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES AS POSSIBLE. "MOVING AWAY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 CAPE T 00558 02 OF 03 211041Z

FROM DISCRIMINATION" IS CLEARLY PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S
BIFURCATED STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SEPARATE
DEVELOPMENT (REFTEL).

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PAGE 01 CAPE T 00558 03 OF 03 211100Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 CAPE TOWN 0558

13. BUT DESPITE THE OPTIMISM OF THE VERLIGTES, REFORMS
WITH REGRAD TO THE MOST PETTY ASPECTS OF APARTHEID, ARE
LIKELY TO BE SLOW AND TORTUROUS AND THE LAWS ENABLING
RETROGRESSION WILL REMAIN ON THE BOOKS. DESPITE A NUMBER
OF ADJUSTMENTS IN THE PAST, THE NATIONAL PARTY REMAINS HIGHLY
CONSERVATIVE AND HAS A STRONG RACIST STRAIN. ANY PROPOSAL FOR
EVEN LIMITED CHANGES IN RACIAL POLICIES MEETS OPPOSITION AMONG
A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF SENIOR PARTY MEMBERS AND THE
WHITE POPULATION GENERALLY. AN EXAMPLE OF THE PAINFUL
ROUTE TO CHANGE WAS PROVIDED IN EARLY 1977, WHEN THE
CABINET, AFTER AN ALL DAY SECRET SESSION, FINALLY DECIDED
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PAGE 02 CAPE T 00558 03 OF 03 211100Z

TO ALLOW THE RECRUITMENT OF INDIAN AND COLORED
(BUT NOT BLACK) GROUND HOSTESSES (BUT NOT AIR STEWARDESSES)
FOR SOUTH AFRICAN AIRLINES.

17. SOUTH AFRICA IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE TO MAKE GRADUAL
PROGRESS IN UNRAVELING THE WEB OF SOCIAL SEGREGATION
KNOWN AS PETTY APARTHEID. ON THE PAST RECORD, THE REFORMS
IN PRACTICE WILL NOT BE AS MEANINGFUL AS THE VERLIGTES
BELIEVE OR AS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT SPOKESMEN WILL
CLAIM; INDEED, AT HOME, THE GOVERNMENT MAY STILL FEEL
COMPELLED TO DOWNPLAY THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

15. AS IN THE PAST, LEGISLATIVE REFORMS IN THIS AREA
SEEM UNLIKELY. THE GOVERNMENT IS OPPOSED TO "FORCED
INTEGRATION" AND THUS WILL VERY LIKELY NOT CONTEMPLATE
SCRAPPING THE SEPARATE AMENITIES LAW. THE GOVERNMENT
WILL, HOWEVER, CONTINUE TO GRANT TO HOTELS AND OTHER
ENTERPRISES, ADMINISTRATIVE EXCEPTIONS TO THE GROUP AREAS
ACTS, BUT IT IS MOST UNLIKELY TO SURRENDER ITS POWER
TO RESERVE THE USE OF LAND OR FACILITIES FOR ANY PURPOSE
EXCLUSIVELY TO ONE RACIAL GROUP. THIS POWER WAS IN FACT
STRENGTHENED DURING THE 1977 SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WITH
THE ENACTMENT OF THE RESERVATION OF PUBLIC AMENITIES
AMENDMENT ACT, WHICH TRANSFERRED ADDITIONAL POWERS IN
THIS AREA FROM THE PROVINCES TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

16. THE NATURE OF THE CHANGES AND THEIR APPLICATION
WILL CONTINUE TO VARY ACCORDING TO LOCALITY. THE
URBAN CENTERS OF JOHANNESBURG AND CAPE TOWN WILL CONTINUE
IN THE LEAD; BUT EVEN THESE RELATIVELY PROGRESSIVE CENTERS
WILL BE RESTRICTED IN WHAT THEY CAN DO BY PROVINCIAL AND
CENTRAL AUTHORITIES, AND WILL THEMSELVES MOST LIKELY
AVOID WHAT THEY CONSIDER THE MOST DELICATE SORT OF MIXING
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PAGE 03 CAPE T 00558 03 OF 03 211100Z

SUCH AS INTEGRATION OF SWIMMING POOLS AND TOILETS. STEPS
IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO REMOVE SEGREGATION ARE LIKELY TO BE
IN THE AREAS OF TRANSPORTATION, EXPENSIVE HOTELS,
RESTAURANTS, BEACHES IN THE CAPE AND IN SPORTS. AS A
RESULT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW
CONSTITUTIONAL PROPOSALS, CHANGES FOR COLOREDS AND INDIANS
COULD POSSIBLY COME MUCH MORE RAPIDLY THAN FOR AFRICANS
AND IN THE LONG TERM THIS COULD ERODE THE APARTHEID
STRUCTURE AS APPLIED TO BLACKS. THE MIXED MARRIAGES AND
IMMORALITY ACTS ARE ESPECIALLY SENSITIVE SUBJECTS, AND
AS INDICATED IN THE RECENT PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE, THE

GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION TO ABOLISH THESE ACTS.

17. IN ANY EVENT, LIKELY PROGRESS IN THE AREA OF PETTY APARTHEID WILL HAVE ONLY A SUPERFICIAL IMPACT ON SOCIAL SEGREGATION PRACTICES IN SOUTH AFRICA OR ON THE LIVES OF THE GREAT MAJORITY OF BLACKS. THE CHANGES WILL NOT AFFECT THE BASIC POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE COUNTRY BUT WILL BE INTENDED PRIMARILY TO DAMPEN RESISTANCE TO IT. THIS COULD SUCCEED TO SOME EXTENT. BUT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT REFORMS IN THE SOCIAL REALM WILL KEEP PACE WITH GROWING BLACK ASPIRATIONS OR THEIR DEMANDS FOR POLITICAL RIGHTS WITHIN THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATION. BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS AND MUCH OF THE WORLD ARE LIKELY TO SEE THE CHANGES AS "TOO LITTLE TOO LATE" OR AS COSMETIC. MEANINGFUL CHANGES IN SOCIAL SEGREGATION IN SOUTH AFRICA WILL NOT OCCUR UNTIL THERE IS FUNDAMENTAL POLITICAL CHANGE.

18. NEVERTHELESS, EVEN SLOW AND LIMITED PROGRESS IN THIS AREA REMOVES IRRITANTS AND HAS A LONG-TERM EROSION EFFECT ON THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE. IT ALSO HAS A CERTAIN INHERENT VALUE. TO THE EXTENT THAT REDUCTION OF PETTY SEGREGATION PRACTICES FACILITATES HUMAN CONTACT BETWEEN THE RACES IN SOUTH AFRICA, IT COULD ENHANCE THE POSSIBILITIES OF BLACK-WHITE DIALOGUE.

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PAGE 04 CAPE T 00558 03 OF 03 211100Z

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